

DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET INFORMATION BUDGET (12)

MISSION

To compile and monitor all necessary financial planning information and make recommendations so that the City Administration can efficiently deliver quality services to preserve the public safety, promote economic development and strengthen the financial base of the City.

DESCRIPTION

The Budget Department is primarily responsible for the preparation of the annual operating and capital improvement budgets and the five-year capital agenda. Critical functions are monitoring City revenues and expenditures throughout the fiscal year, and relating financial activity to the plan expressed by the budget and to the long-term strategic direction set for the City. Development, implementation and coordination of management information systems is essential to all aspects of financial planning and control. Department staff coordinate City employee travel and perform management audits of City operations.

CORE SERVICES

Internal Services – Budget's primary role is to plan resource allocation for city operations and to approve agency contracts, purchase orders, personnel actions, and requests of the City Council. Budget teams facilitate these key internal services by coordinating operating needs across city agencies, assuring funds availability, and helping agency representatives efficiently navigate the approval process. Budget contributes to all of the city's core service priorities through: surplus-deficit analysis, cost and program performance projections, management studies, the long-term

assessment of agencies' operating environs, and operationalizing the Core Service Priorities and other policies.

MAJOR INITIATIVES

In the current and coming fiscal years, our agency budget is status quo.

The e-Budget initiative rolls out with the 2001-02 executive budget and related documents available on the city's website for the first time ever. This increases access to the information while conserving paper and minimizing staff overtime. In 2001-02, the Redbook budget, public budget meeting Information Packet, and any other public reports we may generate will all be posted on the site.

The Mayor's core services initiative is also reflected in these budget documents through the addition of two new planning charts: The Budget arranged by Major Program Category; and Core Service Priorities in the Budget. The first Scorecards of Core Service are introduced in this executive budget to further performance measurement.

The annual public budget meetings continue to center on the citizen survey. October 2000 meeting attendance was slightly up from the prior year, but still less than the two years before that. More surveys were received (152) because they were distributed with the meeting announcement in a bulk mail. We convened a Focus Group on citizen services just after the public meetings, to understand citizen priorities for services as well as the budget making process. We will seek community organization sponsors for each of the 2001 settings in addition to following

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our mailout and publicity plans. In 2001, we will post the survey on the city website and promote citizen use of that forum in addition to the meetings.

In the current year, we are re-bidding the city employee travel management contract. In conjunction with this, we assessed our experience with the travel purchase card, with the Mayor's Office, Law and other departments. We have also realized improvements in travel request processing time, which we attribute to Oracle efficiencies in check-writing.

Budget staff supports the 'Act 312' binding arbitration process for Police and Fire uniformed unions with exhibits and testimony as to the fiscal ability of the City to meet union requests. On June 30, 2001, all Police and Fire union contracts will expire and be subject to this sort of process in the coming year.

An improved version of the Mayor's Proposed 2001-2006 Capital Agenda was presented to City Council. Improvements to the capital planning process are underway; this will include the Mayor's Economic Development Cabinet, which coordinates projects across city agencies and improves information and decision making on development activity within the City.

For the second year, Budget staff led specialized BRASS training sessions for all agencies, at the ITS training center in September 2000. In October 2000, Budget staff were among ten cities participating in the City Living Meeting convened by Syracuse University and Governing

Magazine to redesign the 1999 Government Performance Project into a permanent evaluation program.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The trend for public agencies is for more and better quality information flow. We have improved our core public documents each of the previous five years, and in the near future, we will roll out an Executive budget redesign intended to make information easier to use.

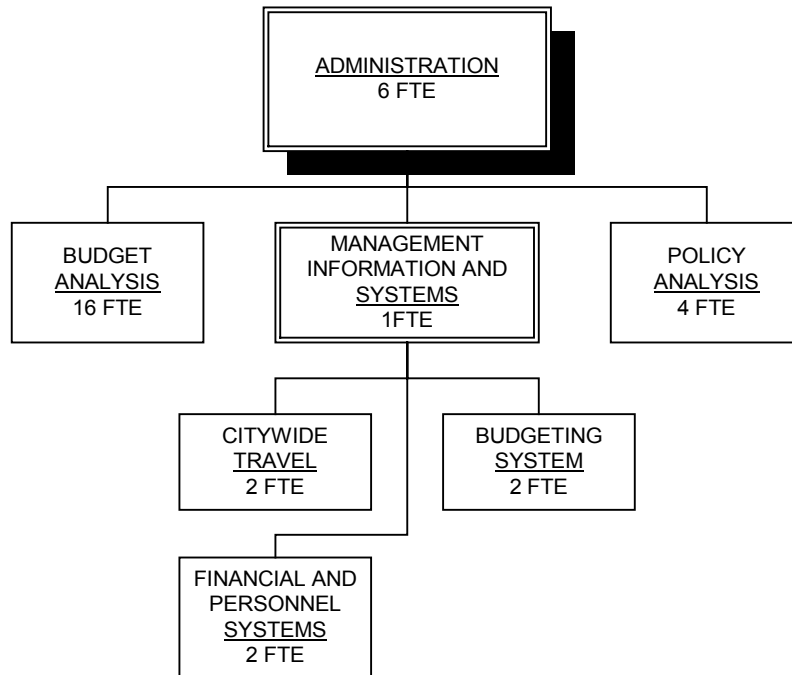
We want to move to a two-year budget, in order to free up agencies from minute procedural details and foster more analytical and development work (in the off-years).

A two-year operating budget is a document authorizing appropriations and anticipated revenues for two budgetary years. Budget Development and adoption occurs in one year, and longer term planning activities occur in the other. Monitoring occurs throughout both periods.

Part of this vision includes moving to activity-based costing, in which all the costs associated with a given service activity are captured and related in a measurable way. Two-year budgeting also relies on longer-term projections, and we plan to improve these on the expenditure end to complement existing major revenue forecasting.

Integrating geographic information systems (GIS) capability into our budget deliberations is also envisioned in the future. We want to better depict the neighborhood impacts of capital proposals and of budget decisions for services.

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PERFORMANCE GOALS, MEASURES AND TARGETS

Goals: Measures	1999-00 Actual	2000-01 Projection	2001-02 Target
Develop quality Departmental and Citywide financial plans: Agencies attending Budget Request Seminar	40	44	44
Monitor conformity of Departmental activities with financial and operations plan: Estimated G.F. expenditures as % actual	N/A	100%	100%
Assist in the ongoing formulation of the Administration's priorities related to the core service priorities through systematic communication of quality fiscal analyses: Management Audit reports completed	3	4	4
Provide efficient quality and user-friendly services to departments: Percent of department budget representatives satisfied	100%	100%	100%

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EXPENDITURES

	1999-00 Actual Expense	2000-01 Redbook	2001-02 Mayor's Budget Rec	Variance	Variance Percent
Salary & Wages	\$ 1,665,329	\$ 1,815,945	\$ 1,827,063	\$ 11,118	1%
Employee Benefits	866,343	870,861	927,040	56,179	6%
Operating Supplies	61,197	55,180	57,220	2,040	4%
Operating Services	187,730	211,009	204,292	(6,717)	-3%
Capital Equipment	6,902	87,500	-	(87,500)	0%
Other Expenses	53,101	30,000	15,000	(15,000)	50%
TOTAL	\$ 2,840,602	\$ 3,070,495	\$ 3,030,615	\$ (39,880)	-1%
POSITIONS	33	33	33	-	0%